

CLAIMS:

1. A computerized system for facilitating transactions in goods or services, the system comprising:

means for allowing electronic procurement of a purchase order agreement

5 between a seller and a buyer and relating to a transaction in one or more goods or services, and for electronically storing the purchase order agreement;

means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure at at least one particular time, based upon buyer transaction activity information stored within the system;

10 means for receiving and storing electronic evidence that the seller has performed in connection with fulfilling the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement; and

means for electronically evaluating whether the seller has complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement.

15 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure comprises means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time.

20 3. The system of claim 2, comprising the system communicating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time to at least one of the buyer and the seller.

4. The system of claim 2 comprising means for providing, in a first transaction between a first seller and a first buyer, an opportunity for the first seller to obtain buyer credit assurance to insure against risk of loss to the first seller resulting from failure of the first buyer to make a required payment in connection with the first transaction.

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5. A computerized system for facilitating transactions in goods or services, the system comprising:

means for allowing electronic procurement of a purchase order agreement between a seller and a buyer and relating to a transaction in one or more goods or services, and for electronically storing the purchase order agreement;

means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure at at least one particular time, based upon buyer transaction activity information stored within the system;

means for receiving and storing electronic evidence that the seller has performed in connection with fulfilling the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement;

means for electronically evaluating whether the seller has complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement;

means for electronically providing a payment instruction if the seller has been evaluated to have complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement; and

means for receiving and storing electronic evidence that the buyer has made one or more payments in connection with fulfilling buyer's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the means for electronically evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure comprises means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time.

7. The system of claim 5, comprising means for providing, in a first transaction between a first seller and a first buyer, an opportunity for the first seller to obtain buyer credit assurance to insure against risk of loss to the first seller resulting from failure of the first buyer to make a required payment in connection with the first transaction.

8. The system of claim 5, wherein the means for electronically evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure comprises means for determining, based upon the buyer transaction activity information, and for any invoice stored by the system and upon which a first amount of payment is required to be paid by the buyer, whether at least a portion of the first amount of payment has been paid by the buyer.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the means for electronically evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure comprises means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the means for evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time comprises means for determining, for a first invoice upon which a first payment is required to be paid by the buyer, when the first payment is

required to be paid by, according to one or more terms of at least one of the first invoice and a first purchase order agreement associated with the first invoice.

11. The system of claim 10, comprising means for providing, in a first transaction between a first seller and a first buyer, if a first buyer's cumulative credit exposure is less than a first predefined maximum cumulative credit exposure for the first buyer, providing an opportunity for the first seller to obtain buyer credit assurance to insure against risk of loss to the first seller resulting from failure of the first buyer to make a required payment in connection with the first transaction, the buyer credit assurance being available up to the predefined maximum cumulative credit exposure.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the predefined maximum cumulative credit exposure is determined based upon credit qualifications of the buyer as indicated by information stored electronically by the system.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the buyer credit assurance is available only up to a predefined maximum transactional assurance limit, the predefined maximum transactional assurance limit being an assurance limit for any transaction entered into by the first buyer.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the predefined maximum transactional assurance limit is determined based upon credit qualifications of the buyer as indicated by information stored electronically by the system.

15. The system of claim 13, wherein the buyer credit assurance is only available up to a predefined maximum relationship credit exposure limit, the predefined maximum relationship credit exposure limit being a limit on a cumulative amount of credit exposure of the first buyer to the first seller, for all transactions between the first buyer and the first seller, as indicated by information stored electronically by the system.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the predefined maximum relationship credit exposure limit is determined based upon credit qualifications of the buyer as indicated by information stored electronically by the system.

17. The system of claim 11, comprising means for electronically advising at least one of the first buyer and the first seller regarding a first portion of the first transaction that is assurable through the system.

18. The system of claim 17, comprising means to present, on at least one of a computer of the seller and a computer of the buyer, a graphical display indicating an anticipated cumulative buyer credit exposure as a function of time and indicating a time at which a transaction is anticipated to be assurable.

19. The system of claim 17, comprising means for electronically indicating to at least one of the seller and the buyer a future time at which the first transaction would be fully assurable through the system.

20. The system of claim 5, comprising means for the system evaluating whether a first set of payment guarantee criteria are met, and means for, if the first set of payment guarantee criteria are evaluated to be met, the system providing a payment guarantee to the seller to guarantee payment by the buyer in connection with the purchase order agreement.

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21. The system of claim 20, wherein the first set of criteria comprises at least one of a credit exposure of the buyer being evaluated by the system to be within a specified maximum credit exposure, and the seller being evaluated by the system to have complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement.

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allowing electronic procurement of a purchase order agreement between a seller and a buyer and relating to a transaction in one or more goods or services, and electronically storing the purchase order agreement;

evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure at at least one particular time,
5 based upon buyer transaction activity information stored within the system;

receiving and storing electronic evidence that the seller has performed in connection with fulfilling the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement;
and

electronically evaluating whether the seller has complied with the seller's
10 obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure comprises evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time.

15 25. The method of claim 24, comprising providing, in a first transaction between a first seller and a first buyer, an opportunity for the first seller to obtain buyer credit assurance to insure against risk of loss to the first seller resulting from failure of the first buyer to make a required payment in connection with the first transaction.

20 26. A computerized method for facilitating transactions in goods or services, the method comprising:

allowing electronic procurement of a purchase order agreement between a seller and a buyer and relating to a transaction in one or more goods or services, and electronically storing the purchase order agreement;

evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure at at least one particular time,
5 based upon buyer transaction activity information stored within the system;

receiving and storing electronic evidence that the seller has performed in connection with fulfilling the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement; and

electronically evaluating whether the seller has complied with the seller's
10 obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement;

electronically providing a payment instruction if the seller has been evaluated to have complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement; and

receiving and storing electronic evidence that the buyer has made one or more payments in connection with fulfilling buyer's obligations as defined by the purchase order
15 agreement.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure comprises evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure anticipated to exist over a period of time.

28. The method of claim 27, comprising providing, in a first transaction between a first seller and a first buyer, an opportunity for the first seller to obtain buyer credit assurance to insure

against risk of loss to the first seller resulting from failure of the first buyer to make a required payment in connection with the first transaction.

29. A computer usable medium storing program code which, when executed on a
5 computerized device, causes the computerized device to execute a computerized method for facilitating transactions in goods or services, the method comprising:

allowing electronic procurement of a purchase order agreement between a seller and a buyer and relating to a transaction in one or more goods or services, and electronically storing the purchase order agreement;

10 evaluating the buyer's cumulative credit exposure at at least one particular time, based upon buyer transaction activity information stored within the system;

receiving and storing electronic evidence that the seller has performed in connection with fulfilling the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement;

15 electronically evaluating whether the seller has complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement;

electronically providing a payment instruction if the seller has been evaluated to have complied with the seller's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement; and

20 receiving and storing electronic evidence that the buyer has made one or more payments in connection with fulfilling buyer's obligations as defined by the purchase order agreement.

5 31. The computer usable medium of claim 29, comprising providing, in a first transaction between a first seller and a first buyer, an opportunity for the first seller to obtain buyer credit assurance to insure against risk of loss to the first seller resulting from failure of the first buyer to make a required payment in connection with the first transaction.